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KANAUJ DURING THE SEVENTH  
CENTURY A. D.

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## HISTORY OF THE MAUKHARIS OF KANAUIJ DURING THE SEVENTH CENTURY A.D.

### *Origin and Early History of the Maukharis :*

The period under review witnesses the downfall of the more famous Maukhari House of northern India. The origin of the Maukharis and their early history are still wrapped up in a shroud of mystery; nor do we know its exact relation with the other notable Maukhari family which ruled in the Gaya district between C. 528 and 575 A.D., as attested by the palaeography of certain votive inscriptions belonging to a ruler of that house, to be found in the Barabar and the Nagarjuni Hills.<sup>1</sup> The existence in the pre-Gupta period of a large number of republican communities in the Ganges valley has been well attested by literary and epigraphic evidence, and it is possible that the Maukharis were one of them. A detailed list of those autonomous tribes, however, cannot be prepared for paucity of information; and, as such, we shall have to fill up gaps by availing not merely the early but also the later evidence relating to them. Taking everything into consideration, it appears that the different Maukhari families were originally one; but later on it divided itself at least into two sections.<sup>2</sup> As stated above, one of the two Maukhari families ruled in south Bihar possi-

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1. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, Inscription Nos. 48, 49, 50.

Some scholars have, however, suggested other dates, e.g., Cunningham places them in the 4th Cent. A.D. (A.S.I.R., iii, p. 137); Pires fixes their period of rule in the first half of the 5th Cent. A.D. (The Maukharis, p. 16); Indrajit and Bühler suggest 5th Cent. A.D. as the period of their reign (I.A., XI, p. 428); Kielhorn is of the opinion that they ruled not later than the first half of the 6th Cent. A.D. (E.I., vi, p. 3); Vaidya assigns them to a date later than that of Harsha (H.M.H.I., i, p. 34).

2. There may have been probably another line and that is of Mayūrasarman mentioned in the Chandravalli Inscription (Archaeological Survey of Mysore, Annual Report, 1929, p. 50). With the available data, however, we cannot say definitely whether it was a separate section or merely an offshoot of the Maukhari House of Gaya. Pires suggests three sections by including the line of kings mentioned in the *Kaumudī-mahotsava*. He is of the opinion that "the name Varman evidently was not a mere honorific suffix but a family name" (The Maukharis, p. 17). But there is no evidence to show that the two kings mentioned in *Kaumudīmahotsava* with 'Varman' as a part of their names, were Maukharis. Family appellation 'Varman' is not special to the Maukharis alone, as Pires thinks, for example Susthitavarman and Bhāskaravarman of Kāmārūpa, Aṃśuvarman of Nepal, and Mādhavavarman of Orissa.



bly with Gaya as its headquarters while the other one ruled over a considerable portion of the Gaṅgā-Jamunā doab with Kanauj as its seat of government. Both the sections must have asserted their independence in the 3rd Cent. A.D. when the vast Kushāṇa empire crumbled into pieces but could not retain it for long owing to the imperialistic policy steadily pursued by another neighbouring power—the Guptas. The absence of any reference to the Maukharis in the Purāṇas as also in the inscriptions of the early Gupta emperors, are positive proofs of their political insignificance, like so many other tribes of northern India of which the Varikas, the Kulūtas, and the Kuṇindas or Kulindas are the most typical examples. Their existence in the pre-Gupta period is, however, proved by certain incidental references relating to them in literature and inscriptions or by certain stray seals and coins.<sup>1</sup> That the Maukharis had existed long before the time of Guptas, is proved by their own seal bearing the legend *Mokhalinam* written in later Mauryan characters (early 2nd Cent. B.C.).<sup>2</sup> This seal inscription not only points to the high antiquity of the Maukharis as a tribe but also suggests that, like the Lichchhavis and others, they were a political community enjoying democratic form of government in the early period of their history, which has been styled Gaṇarājya in Sanskrit literature. Again, like the other autonomous tribes of northern India mentioned in early Buddhist and Jain texts, there must have been a change in their political constitution in the later period of their history, for in the later Gupta

1. C.I.I., iii, p. 253. Ins. No. 59 (Bijayagadh Stone Pillar Inscription of Vishṇu-vardhana).

The Kulūtas were the ancient inhabitants of the Kulu valley in the Kangra district of the Punjab. The earliest literary reference to the Kulūtas is in Varāhamihira's *Bṛihat-Saṃhitā* (xiv, 22, 29) where they appear in the list of the peoples of the North-Eastern Division. Hsuan Chuang visited them in the second quarter of the 7th Cent. A.D. Sometime earlier the author of the *Mudrārākṣha* mentions them as Mlechchhas or foreigners in similar company to Varāhamihira. All available information about them has been collected by Rapson in J.R.A.S., 1900, pp. 530 ff.

The Kuṇindas occupied a narrow strip of land at the foot of the Siwalik hills between the Jamunā and the Sutlej and the territory between the upper courses of the Beas and Sutlej as is indicated by the distribution of their coins (Allan, Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India, p. ci). This agrees very well with the few literary references to that tribe. In the *Bṛihat-Saṃhitā* Varāhamihira places the Kuṇindas in the North-Eastern Division with the Kashmirians, the Kulūtas and the Sairindhas (xiv, 31, 33). The form Kulinda is found in the same source (iv, 24), in the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa*, and also in the *Mahābhārata*. In the last named work, the Kulindas have been placed in the region indicated by the provenance of their coins. The tribe was also known to Ptolemy who has mentioned their country as Kulindrine.

2. C.I.I., iii, p. 14.



period, it is certain that they were enjoying a full-fledged monarchical form of government.

*Origin of the Name Maukhari :*

Regarding the name Maukhari, it may be noted here that in the epigraphical records of the Maukharis themselves as well as in the works of Bāṇa, we come across two forms viz., *Mukhara* and *Maukhari*, both of which have been used indiscriminately. Thus, Bāṇa in his *Harshacharita* mentions the royal house of the Maukharis of Kanauj as the *Mukharas* while in his *Kādambarī* he has referred to the members of the same royal family as “the crowned Maukharis”.<sup>1</sup> In the Barabar Hill Cave Inscription, king Anantavarman refers to his family as *Maukharinām kulam*, i.e., “the family of the Maukharis”, and the name *Maukhari* also occurs in the Apsad Stone Inscription of Ādityasena as also in the Asirgadhi Seal Inscription of Sarvavarman.<sup>2</sup> The Maukhari royal family has been referred to by Śīṇavarman in his famous Haraha Stone Inscription; but there it has been specifically mentioned as the *Mukharas*.<sup>3</sup> It will be seen from these different uses in our sources that both *Maukhari* and *Mukhara* were equally popular as the name of that royal family during the 7th Cent. A.D. But in our opinion the form *Maukhari* is the earlier of the two, since the clay seal referred to above clearly points to that fact. The *Prākṛit* form *Mokhalinam* occurring in that seal phonetically corresponds to Sanskrit *Maukharinam* and not to *Mukharanām*. The attempt of some scholars to find the name of the first member of the *Mukhara* royal house in the two popular designations of the family is unwarranted and unjustifiable.<sup>4</sup> If the founder of the family was known as *Mukhara*, as believed by them, then grammatically we should have *Maukhara* as the name of the family found-

1. *Harṣacarita* (Tr. by Cowell and Thomas), p. 122, 128, 246 (at one place in his H. C., Bāṇa has also used the word *Maukhari*, p. 194); *Kādambarī* (Tr. by Ridding), p. 1.

2. C.I.I., iii, p. 222, 203, 220.

3. सुतशतं लेभे नृपोश्वपतिर्वैवस्वतायदुगुणोदितम् ।

तत्प्रसूता दुरितवृत्तिरुधो मुखराः क्षितीशाः क्षतारयः ॥

E.I., XIV, p. 115, V. 3.

4. Grammatically it is possible to have the patronymic form *Maukhara* if the name of the founder of the family is *Mukhara*. It is not possible, however, to have a patronymic form like *Maukhari* from *Mukhara*, strictly on the basis of grammatical rules.



ded by him. Again, it is impossible to derive the name Maukhari from Mukhara, admitting it to be the name of its founder. We consider that both the names were unrestrictedly used in referring originally to the community and later on to the royal families connected with it. We must remember that the Mukharas or the Maukharis were originally an autonomous tribe as suggested by their earliest epigraphic record, the legend in the clay seal referred to above. Correct derivation of the name of any community belonging to ancient period is an utter impossibility, and, as such, we should not expect a sensible interpretation of the name Maukhari as well.

### *Caste of the Maukharis :*

The caste of the Maukharis is no less controversial than their origin. Modern historians are not unanimous in their opinion regarding their caste; and, in fact, it is difficult to say precisely to which particular section of the Hindu society they did belong. As stated above, the different Maukhari families were originally one; and since they managed their own political affairs like the other kshatriya tribes of ancient India, there are good reasons to believe that they too might have considered themselves to be of kshatriya extraction. In the cave inscriptions of Anantavarman we find a strong corroboration of this fact. For instance, in his Barabar Hill Cave Inscription that Maukhari king represents himself as "the lamp of the kshatriya family" (dīpaḥ kshattra kulasya) and in one of his Nagarjuni Hill Cave Inscriptions he also describes himself as "the path of the abode of all the (noble) qualities of the kshatriyas" (kshātrasya dhāmnāḥ padaṁ).<sup>1</sup> The Haraha Stone Inscription of Īśānavarman indirectly supports the tradition recorded in the aforesaid epigraphic records. The compiler of that inscription informs us that the Maukharis were the descendants of the hundred sons whom king Aśvapati obtained from Vaivasvata.<sup>2</sup> Reference to Vaivasvata may be taken to be an indication of the fact that the Maukharis of Kanauj considered themselves to belong

1. दीपाः क्षत्रकुलस्य नैक-समर-व्यापार-शोभावतः

C.I.I., iii, p. 233.

क्षत्रस्य धाम्नः पदं

C.I.I., iii, p. 227.

2. E.I., XIV, p. 115, V. 3, (Tr. p. 119).



to the solar race, since Manu, whose other name was Vaivasvata, was of solar lineage, and, as such, a true-born kshatriya.<sup>1</sup> We do not find any reference either in literature or in inscriptions which definitely contradicts the family tradition of the Maukharis that they belonged to the kshatriya community.<sup>2</sup> The controversy regarding their caste has actually arisen from a statement of Hsuan Chuang that emperor Śīlāditya i.e., to say Harshavardhana was a Vaiśya by caste.<sup>3</sup> Now the question is: how was it possible for the Maukhari king Grahavarman to marry in the royal family of the Pushyabhūti and bring Rājyaśrī, a Vaiśya girl, as his first wife? In this context, it may be mentioned here that the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa does not directly or indirectly mention that the Pushyabhūti belonged to the Vaiśya community; nor is there any epigraphical record of the period which lends support to that casual observation of Hsuan Chuang. Thus, the controversy which is raging round the caste of the Maukharis and that of the Pushyabhūti is wholly based on what has been stated by that Chinese pilgrim as mentioned above. Before we draw any conclusions regarding the caste of any one of these two royal families, there are certain facts of prime importance which we must very carefully consider. Grahavarman Maukhari married Rājyaśrī, the only daughter of Prabhākaravardhana, and there is no information available either in the *Harshacharita* or in the work of Hsuan Chuang to suggest that king Avantivarman had already established matrimonial alliance with one or more royal families of northern India through him—the heir-apparent to the Maukhari throne.

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1. This is the opinion of Pt. Hiranand Sastri (E.I., XIV, 119), the editor of the inscription, but some scholars on the basis of the *Mahābhārata* (III, 296, 38 ff) identify Vaivasvata with Yama. The identification of Vaivasvata mentioned in the Haraha Stone Inscription has thus become a matter of controversy, but the tradition as preserved in the *Mahābhārata* clearly shows that the ancestors of King Āśvapati were of solar origin.

2. Jayaswal, however, considers them to be Vaiśyas: "I think that the modern Mauhari caste, almost solely located in the Gaya district, are their representatives. They are Baniyas, i.e., Vaiśyas now" (letter quoted by Aravamudan in 'The Kaveri, the Maukharis and the Sangam Age', p. 80, note 1). But in ancient times, persons belonging to a particular caste are known to have changed their profession for that prescribed for another caste. Prithviśeṇa, the commander-in-chief of the army of Kumāragupta I, who was a Brahmin by birth, is a case to the point.

3. Watters, i. p. 343.



Intercaste marriage between the Hindu royal families in those days is an established fact; but it is difficult to believe that Grahavarman himself preferred or was even permitted by his relations to have a Vaiśya girl as his first wife and Chief Queen (agramahishī). According to Manu, a kshatriya must have a kshatriya girl as his first wife and afterwards he may lawfully marry a Vaiśya and even a Śūdra girl, if he so desires.<sup>1</sup> We are strongly of the opinion that the law formulated by Manu and supported by other legists of Ancient India, was rigid so far as the marriages in the royal families were concerned, and not flexible.<sup>2</sup> From the *Harshacharita* we get the impression that, after the death of Avantivarman, Grahavarman himself sent the proposal of his marriage to king Prabhākaravardhana, from which it appears that he was unmarried at the time when he ascended the throne. Again, it is most unlikely that a powerful king like Prabhākaravardhana would have condescended to give his only daughter in marriage with Grahavarman, if there was no possibility for her to become the Chief Queen. Since he was satisfied that his daughter would adorn the Maukhari royal family by being at first the Chief Queen and afterwards the mother of the future ruler of the Maukhari kingdom, he unhesitatingly entertained the proposal made by Grahavarman relating to his marriage with Rājyaśrī. If both Grahavarman and Rājyaśrī belonged to the kshatriya caste, the marriage contracted between the two was regular and valid. But if that Maukhari king belonged to the kshatriya caste and his wife belonged to that of the Vaiśyas, the marriage was unlawful, since it was not of the form prescribed by the ancient law-givers for bringing the first wife. Taking all these facts into consideration, we have come to the conclusion that the Pushyabhūtis were also kshatriyas like the Maukharis, although we have no positive evidence to corroborate the same.

If both the royal families, viz., the Pushyabhūtis and the Maukharis, had not belonged to the kshatriya community, the author of the *Harshacharita*, who is presumed to have witnessed the

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1. Manu, vii, 77.

2. Yājñavalkya, lvii, 57.



marriage of Rājyaśrī, would not have compared them with the Sun and the Moon.<sup>1</sup> It appears that, instead of using the stereotyped expression *kshatriya*, he has told us that the rulers of those two families belonged to the purest *kshatriya* stocks. If the Pushyabhūtis had been Vaiśya by caste, Bāṇa would not have made his position ridiculous by making a false suggestion regarding the nobility of their descent by instituting that comparison. He has definitely eulogised the lineages of both Prabhākaravardhana and Grahavarman though in a poetic manner, but without any hesitation or scruple as the expressions chosen by him signify.

Now coming to the question: if the Pushyabhūtis were *kshatriyas*, how is it that emperor Śīlāditya has been mentioned by Hsuan Chuang as belonging to the Vaiśya caste?<sup>2</sup> We do not know what led that Chinese pilgrim to come to that conclusion or what was his authority for that statement. One fact is, however, certain, and that is—his remark could not have been based on the court tradition of the Pushyabhūtis; for no one is expected to talk with an outsider or a foreigner disparagingly about the king's caste, if it be a low one. This is of course the common-sense view of the problem confronting us here. There is, however, a point which we must not overlook in the present context; Emperor Harshavardhana was an orthodox Buddhist, and, as such, rightly or wrongly, he was considered by the Brāhmaṇas to be anti-Brahmanical in his thoughts and ideas. We believe that getting no support or patronage from the emperor as much as was their expectation, some of the disgruntled Brāhmaṇas might have started a mischievous propaganda about his caste which Hsuan Chuang has recorded

1. “त्वां प्राप्य चिरात्खलु राज्यश्रिया घटितौ तेजोमयी सकल जगद्गीयमान बुध कर्णानन्द-कारिगुणगणौ सोमसूर्य वंशाविष पुण्यभूतिमुखर वंशौ ।” Text (ed. by Parab, K. P.) p. 146.

In this passage Bāṇa has simply made an allegorical statement, but some scholars like N.R. Ray (Calcutta Review, Feb., 1928, vol. XXVI, No. 2, p. 203) and Pires (The Maukharis, p. 11, 12) have erroneously concluded that the comparison has been made because the two Houses in question were connected with the Sun and the Moon respectively. The hypothesis and the arguments of the two scholars, however, seem to be far-fetched. The purpose of Bāṇa was merely to eulogize the two *kshatriya* families by comparing them with the two well-known *kshatriya* houses that are famous both in Indian legends and history.

2. Watters, i, p. 343.



without taking the trouble of verifying it, thinking it probably to be imprudent on his part to do so.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case may be, in the face of the contemporary and almost contemporary literary and epigraphic records, as mentioned above, it has not been possible for us to accept the statement of a foreigner that Emperor Śilāditya was a Vaiśya, setting aside the popular belief or court tradition that both the Pushyabhūtis and the Maukharis were true-born kshatriyas.<sup>2</sup>

*Later History of the Maukharis upto the time of Avantivarman :*

During the 7th cent. A.D., there were at least three kings of the Maukhari family who had ruled in the Gaṅgā-Jamunā doab with Kanauj as their seat of government. They are Avantivarman, Grahavarman and another who has been referred to in the *Ārya-Maṇjuśrī-Mūla-Kalpa* but unfortunately his full name does not occur there.<sup>3</sup> This non-descript successor of Grahavarman has also been mentioned for the second time in a seal inscription discovered recently at Nālandā.<sup>4</sup> Here too, owing to the damaged condition of the seal only the first syllable of his name can be ascertained. The genealogy of the kings belonging to this Maukhari House as given in some inscriptions is as follows :

Mahārāja Harivarman	m.	Jayasvāminī
„ Ādityavarman	m.	Harshaguptā
„ Īśvaravarman	m.	Upaguptā
Mahārājādhirāja Īśānavarman	m.	Lakshmīvatī
„ Sarvavarman	m.	Indrabhaṭṭārikā
„ Avantivarman		
„ Su (—————)		

1. The underlying idea is that the members of the third caste are not so charitable or generous as the upper two !

2. The statement of the Chinese pilgrim, however, has received some corroboration from a Buddhist text, the *Āryamaṇjuśrīmūlakalpa*, in which king Ādityavardhana, one of the ancestors of Harsha, has been definitely mentioned as of Vaiśya origin (ed. by Ganapati Sastri, p. 626). The problem relating to the caste of the Pushyabhūtis is thus a matter of controversy. There can be no wonder if the Chinese pilgrim as well as the author of that Buddhist work have made that statement on the basis of the very same source of information and that is the Brahmanical theory relating to the origin of the Pushyabhūtis.

3. *Āryamaṇjuśrīmūlakalpa*, p. 626; See also Jayaswal, Imperial History of India, p. 27.

4. E.I., XXIV, p. 284-285.



During the decadent period of the history of the imperial Guptas, i.e., to say, after the death of Budhagupta, a number of monarchical States had come into existence, of which the Maukhari kingdom of Kanauj was one.<sup>1</sup> During the early Gupta period, it is presumed that the rulers of the Maukhari house of Kanauj were merely vassal chiefs; but taking advantage of the weakness of the successor of Budhagupta, his feudatories re-established themselves in their former kingdoms as independent rulers. What is true of the Maukharis, is also true of many other dynasties such as the Pushyabhūti, the Maitrakas, the Gaudas and the Mālavas. Although Harivarman is the earliest known ruler of the Maukhari principality of Kanauj, it was Īśānavarman who brought his family into limelight by successfully waging wars against the neighbouring powers and annexing their territories, as we know from his famous Haraha Stone Inscription.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to say exactly how far Īśānavarman was successful in his attempt to build up an empire in northern India; but there is no doubt that the kingdom of the Maukharis extended as far as the Himālayas in the north, the river Narmadā to the south, river Jamunā to the west and the river Ganges and Brahmaputra to the east, when he had finished his career of conquest. It is true, however, that a portion of his vast kingdom was previously conquered by his father Īśvaravarman, particularly the south-west part of it, as evidenced by his Jaunpur Stone Inscription which specifically mentions that he, after defeating the Āndhras, extended his conquest as far as the Raivataka Hill, which is to say, upto the very heart of Kathiawar.<sup>3</sup> Sarvavarman, the son and successor of Īśānavarman was, however, not powerful enough to maintain the frontiers of the vast kingdom which was bequeathed to him by his father, since the available sources of information clearly point to the loss of the territories in the south and south-west and also perhaps to a certain extent in the east. The territories which came to be freed from the Maukhari yoke during his reign appear to be Mālavā or eastern Mālavā, Mo-la-po or western Mālavā, and Gauda. That

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1. During this period the Maukhari family of Gaya was already in existence.

2. E.I., XIV, p. 110.

3. C.I.I., iii, p. 228, No. 51.



he ruled over a considerable portion of Shahabad district in south Bihar has been definitely established by an incidental reference to him in the Deo-Barnark Inscription of Jivitagupta II;<sup>1</sup> but his Asirgadh Seal Inscription does not prove conclusively that he exercised sovereign sway over Madhya Bhārata for a number of reasons. Īśānavarman's conquest of the Valabhi kingdom or even a portion of it is purely a matter of conjecture; and the same remark holds good in the case of Sarvavarman as well. In this connection, we should like to draw the attention of scholars to a fact of prime importance. Prabhākaravardhana, as described by Bāṇa, was "an axe to the Mālava creeper" which may be taken to signify that he conquered Mālavā, rather Eastern Mālavā which had previously been conquered by Īśānavarman during his campaign in the regions lying to the north of the Narmadā. Although there is no precise information in the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa, it appears that the relation between the Pushyabhūtis and the Maukharis was cordial, a fact which might have led Grahavarman Maukhari to send proposal of his marriage with the daughter of Prabhākaravardhana.<sup>2</sup> This, however, would not have been possible if Prabhākaravardhana had wrested a part of the Maukhari kingdom lying in the south. There was no question of hereditary feud between the Pushyabhūtis and the Maukharis, since whatever was conquered by Prabhākaravardhana in the south had already been lost in the reign of Sarvavarman. It is over this truncated Maukhari kingdom, with Kanauj as the seat of government, that Avantivarman and his two successors had ruled in the period under review.

#### *Avantivarman :*

With Avantivarman opens an eventful chapter in the history of northern India; but unfortunately we do not know much about the life and political career of this Maukhari king for paucity of evidence. He has been undoubtedly mentioned by Bāṇa in his *Harshacharita* as the father of Grahavarman, son-in-law of illustrious Prabhākaravardhana the ruler of Thāneśwara.<sup>3</sup> He has also

1. C.I.I., p. 216, No. 46.

2. H.C., p. 122-23.

3. *ibid*, p. 122.



been mentioned in a seal inscription discovered at Nālandā belonging to the reign of his son whose name is very much mutilated and is beyond any possibility of restoration.<sup>1</sup> The Deo-Barnark Inscription of Jivitagupta II also mentions him in connection with the worship of the God Varuṇavāsin and the recognition by him of all the land-grant charters which were issued from time to time by different local rulers in favour of that deity.<sup>2</sup> In addition to these, we have got certain silver coins belonging to his reign all of which were discovered in the central and western parts of Uttar Pradesh.<sup>3</sup> The information supplied by the aforesaid sources is most inadequate for the purpose of reconstructing the history of his reign. For instance, we do not know what was his exact relation with the preceding Maukhari king Sarvavarman, since the Nālandā Seal Inscription mentioned above is altogether silent about it. The same is true also of the *Harshacharita* because its author has said nothing about him which is of any consequence in that context. His coins, however, throw some light on his date because since the time of Īśānavarman, dated coins were issued by the Maukharis following the practice of the imperial Guptas. The probability is, however, that he was the son of Sarvavarman and enjoyed throughout a peaceful reign. He was undoubtedly a very powerful king of his time, since in addition to the ancestral territory of the Maukharis, he exercised sovereign sway not only over the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh but even over a considerable portion of Bihar as evidenced by the Deo-Barnark Inscription referred to above.<sup>4</sup> It is because of the vastness of his territory and the imperial dignity enjoyed by him<sup>5</sup> that Bāṇa had no hesitation in admitting that Avanti-varman was the "pride of the Mukhara race", which according to him "stood at the head of all royal houses and was worshipped

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1. E.I., XXIV, p. 285.

2. C.I.I., iii, p. 216, No. 46.

3. J.R.A.S., 1906, pp. 843-850.

4. C.I.I., iii, p. 216, No. 46.

5. This is signified by the use of "Parameśvara" for him in the Deo-Barnark Inscription, (C.I.I., iii, p. 216).



like Śiva's foot-print, by all the world."<sup>1</sup> We do not consider what has been stated by that eminent writer to be purely eulogistic, since the power and glory of the Maukharis had reached their zenith not in the early but in the later part of their history. It must not be construed, however, that since Avantivarman died before the marriage of his son with Rājyaśrī, Bāṇa, out of respect for that deceased king, had used those choicest expressions in his own artistic way.

We are not certain when Avantivarman died but considering the fact that Grahavarman Maukhari was assassinated within a few years of his accession to the throne and marriage with the daughter of Prabhākaravardhana, it might have occurred in or about the year 601 A.D. The same uncertainty, it may be noted here, remains in respect of the date of his accession to the throne as also of the duration of his reign. His coins undoubtedly bear a date; but the numerical figures, being highly blurred, do not afford any material help towards the solution of all these chronological problems.<sup>2</sup>

From Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* we learn that Avantivarman was the disciple of Bhātsu, a renowned ascetic-philosopher of the time. That eminent ascetic was also the spiritual guide (guru) of Bāṇa.<sup>3</sup> From this interesting piece of information we can only conclude that Avantivarman was a religious-minded king. He was probably also a patron of learning, since his feudatory Viśākhadatta, who composed

1. H.C., p. 122

धरणी धराणां च मूर्ध्नि स्थितो माहेश्वरः

पादन्यासं इव सकलभुवननमस्कृतो मौखरोवंशः । Text, p. 141.

2. The different readings of the dates on his coins are as follows :

Burn—250, 57, 71.

Brown—250, 57, 70 (?).

Dikshit—260, 26x, 57, 17.

The year 250 seems to be a date according to the Gupta system of calculation ( $250 + 320 = 570$  A.D.). This date is likely to fall in the reign of Avantivarman. See also Burn, J.R.A.S., 1906, p. 849; Brown, Catal. of Coins of the Guptas, Maukharis etc. in the Luck. Mus., p. 39; Tripathi, History of Kanauj, p. 57; Pires, The Maukharis, p. 163.

3. *Kādambarī*, p. 1.



the *Devichandraguptam* and the *Mudrārākshasa*, has mentioned his name in the colophon of the latter work.<sup>1</sup> We, however, do not want to lay emphasis on this point since in certain editions of *Mudrārākshasa* other names figure in the same colophon in the place of that of Avantivarman.<sup>2</sup>

### Grahavarman:

The successor of Avantivarman was his son Grahavarman Maukhari.<sup>3</sup> It is very unfortunate that his name does not find mention in any of the epigraphs discovered so far.<sup>4</sup> The narrative of his reign we owe entirely to Bāṇa. From the *Harshacharita* we learn that when the thought of Rājyaśrī's marriage was worrying Prabhākaravardhana, one day he told his chief queen Yaśomati, "in general.....though a bridegroom may have other merits, the wise especially incline towards good family. Now at the head of all royal houses stand the Mukharas, worshipped, like Śiva's foot-print by all the world. Of that race's pride, Avantivarman, the eldest son, Grahavarman by name, who lacks not his

1. *Mudrā-Rākshasa* (Nirnaya Sagar Press, 8th edition), Introduction, p. 21, 317. See also I.A., XLIII, p. 67 and J.R.A.S., 1900, p. 535.

2. The other readings of the name are Chandragupta (*Mudrā-Rākshasa*, p. 21; I.A., XLII, p. 265 and LI, p. 49) and Rantivarman (*Mudrā-Rākshasa*, p. 21; I.A., XLIII, p. 67).

3. Ghosh doubts "whether Grahavarman ever came to the throne" (E.I., XXIV, P. 284, fn. 8). It is a strange observation, for a reading of the *Harshacharita* dispels every doubt in this respect. The *Mañjusūtimūlakalpa* also clearly states that Avantivarman (Parikṭi) was succeeded by Graha (Varman) (p. 626). The Nālandā Seal of Su (—) certainly does not mention Grahavarman as a successor of Avantivarman, but there are many such examples where the name of the son who is to succeed or succeeded his father has been omitted and that of another son has been mentioned, e.g., a Vaiśālī Seal mentions the name of Govinda Gupta as son of Chandra Gupta II by Dhruvadevi, but not that of Kumāra Gupta I (A.S.I.R., 1903-4, p. 107, Seal No. 1). That Govinda Gupta was the Yuvarāja is evident from another Seal which has been found along with it. In that Seal there is an inscription which reads as युवराज पादीय कुमारमात्य. Again, the Bhitari Seal Inscription of Kumāra Gupta II mentions Puru Gupta immediately after Kumāra Gupta and does not mention Skanda Gupta, the immediate successor of his father, at all (I.A.; XIX, p. 225). Similarly the Poona Copper Plate Inscription mentions the name of Yuvarāja Divākarasena, son of Rudrasena II and Prabhāvatiguptā (E.I., XV, p. 41ff), but in the other Vākāṭaka inscriptions such as Nachne-Ki-talai, and Siwani and Chammak plates, the name of Mahārāja Pravarasena II, son of Prabhāvatiguptā, occurs immediately after Rudrasena II being his son and immediate successor (C.I.I., iii, pp. 234, 236, 245).

4. Pires has suggested that Grahavarman's name was recorded in the Deo-Barnark Inscription of Jīvita Gupta II (The Maukharis, p. 107). We, however, do not find any trace of his name in the inscription though the name of his father Avantivarman is certainly mentioned there.



father's virtues, a prince like the lord of planets descended upon earth, seeks our daughter. Upon him, if your Majesty's thoughts are likewise favourable, I propose to bestow her".<sup>1</sup> From another passage in the same work we come to know "on a day of good omen, in the presence of the whole household, he (Prabhākaravardhana) poured the bethrothal water upon the hand of an envoy extraordinary, who had arrived previously with instructions from Grahavarman to sue for the princess".<sup>2</sup> These passages of the *Harshacharita* clearly reveal the fact that Grahavarman was the first male issue of Avantivarman and that his marriage took place after the death of his father when he had already ascended the throne.<sup>3</sup>

This matrimonial alliance was a very important event in the history of the period. And, in the words of Bāṇa himself, it "at length united the two brilliant lines of Pushpabhūti and Mukhara, whose worth, like that of the Sun and Moon houses, is sung by all the world to the gratification of wise men's ears".<sup>4</sup> He has also given us a very graphic and interesting description of the marriage. "All the world bedecked itself with betel perfumes, and flowers, distributed with a lavish hand. From every country were summoned companies of skilled artists". "Throngs of astrologers, set calculating, investigated characteristics of different moments". "Even kings girt up their loins and busied themselves in carrying out decorative work". "From the furthest orient had come the

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1. H.C., p. 122-23.

2. *ibid*, p. 123.

3. If his father would have been alive, he himself would not have entered into such negotiations in the traditional Indian way. Dr. Tripathi, however, observes; "we should be cautious in drawing any conclusion from Avantivarman's absence during the ceremonies, for he may have stayed behind deeming it imprudent to leave the capital unprotected" (History of Kanauj, p. 50). We fail to visualise the crisis in the Maukhari Kingdom due to which Avantivarman had to forego the pleasure of attending the marriage of his eldest son as suggested by Dr. Tripathi. In case the Maukhari Kingdom would have been threatened from some quarter, as stated by him, the marriage ceremony itself would have been postponed in the larger national interest. In fact in such a situation Grahavarman, being the Crown-Prince, would have been by the side of his father in his own capital instead of proceeding to Thanēswara to marry! Besides, we should remember that Bāṇa also makes no mention of Avantivarman in the later narrative of the *Harshacharita* which may warrant such a conclusion. Even Saṁvādaka, the royal messenger, who broke the news of the death of Grahavarman and imprisonment of Rājyaśrī to Rājya and Harsha in the *Harshacharita* makes no reference to Avantivarman (certainly because he was dead long ago).

4. H.C., p. 128.



queens of all the feudatories, nobles.....well-clad, unwidowed dames with lines of vermilion powder glittering on their foreheads". "The palace was arrayed in textures flashing on every side like thousands of rainbows". "Thus the royal household became as it were the essence of freedom from widowhood; a world seemed born full of auspiciousness". And at last "calculated as it were by the people's fingers,.....welcomed by reverberations of auspicious music, invoked by astrologers, attracted by wishes.... the marriage day arrived".<sup>1</sup>

But alas ! All the calculations regarding the auspicious moment had been miscalculated. From the *Harshacharita* itself we come to know that immediately after the death of Prabhākaravardhana, when the two princes of the Thāneśwara royal family had still not been able even to shake off their grief, a trusted servant of Rājyaśrī named Saṁvādaka arrived from Kanauj and informed them the following : "on the very day on which the king's death was rumoured, His Majesty Grahavarman was by the wicked lord of Mālavā (Malwa) cut off from the living along with his noble deeds. Rājyaśrī also, the princess, has been confined like a brigand's wife with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet, and cast into prison at Kānyakubja."<sup>2</sup>

The facts which can be deduced from the awful tale of Saṁvādaka are of much importance in the political history of the period. The king of Mālavā, whose name Bāṇa has even disdained to mention, killed Grahavarman, possibly in a battle, took possession of the seat of government of the Maukharis and put Rājyaśrī into prison to render her completely powerless for taking action against the invader. Although that eminent writer is silent about the name of "the wicked king of Mālavā", we have definite information preserved in the Banskhera Copper Plate Inscription of Harsha that he was Devagupta against whom Rājyavardhana had to direct his

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1. H.C., P. 123-26 ff.

2. *ibid*, p. 173.

Hillebrandt has suggested that Grahavarman, the son of Avantivarman, was killed in Rājyavardhana's expedition against the Hūṇas (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, XXXIX, 131). The suggestion is certainly an ingenious one—only, I am afraid, it can scarcely be ever proved.



army, evidently for the purpose of avenging the murder of his brother-in-law, the Maukhari king Grahavarman. Devagupta, in all probability, was a son of Mahāsenagupta, king of Mālavā who had to fight many battles with his neighbours in northern India, both for offensive and defensive purposes. Regarding Devagupta's claim to the throne of Mālavā there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars. While it is maintained by some that he was the uterine brother of the two princes Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta who had spent many years of their early life in the royal palace at Thāneśwara as hostages or as proteges or, as stated by Bāṇa, as friends of the two princes Rājya and Harsha, others believe that he represented a collateral line of Mālava royal house.<sup>1</sup> When for some important political reason Prabhākaravardhana annexed Mālavā, which we have reasons to believe to be Eastern Mālwā, obviously after the death of his maternal uncle Mahāsenagupta, Devagupta was either ousted by him or allowed to rule as his feudatory.<sup>2</sup> It is evident from the sequence of events that Devagupta was not satisfied with his position whatever that might have been. When he got the information that Prabhākaravardhana was on the verge of death, he immediately attacked the kingdom of the Maukharis, instead of that of the Pushyabhūti though it may appear to many to have been a strategical blunder. But it was really not so. The strategy which Devagupta followed, was to uproot at first the more powerful enemy, the Maukhari king Grahavarman who was an ally of the royal house of the Pushyabhūti, and thereafter occupy the kingdom of Thāneśwara by defeating, as he thought, the less powerful enemy, the youthful crown prince Rājyavardhana. He was very sanguine of the fact that if in any way that Maukhari king was prevented from helping the Pushyabhūti, it would not be difficult for him to oust the two princes Rājya and Harsha and, after that, exercise political supremacy over the kingdom of Thāneśwara and its dependencies without further obstruction from any quarters. History shows that his military strategy was successful, at least partly, since

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1. See Raychaudhri, *Pol. Hist. of Anc. Ind.*, p. 515; Mookerji, *Harsha*, p. 54; Pires, *The Maukharis*, pp. 111-12; Majumdar, *Classical Age*, pp. 74-5.

2. We strongly believe that Mahāsenagupta was the brother of Mahāsenaguptā, queen of Ādityavardhana, whose son was Prabhākara.



he did occupy Kanauj, the Maukhari capital, by killing Grahavarman and putting Rājyaśrī in prison in pursuit of his previous plan. Unfortunately, he wrongly calculated the military strength of the Pushyabhūti and also the military genius of the heir-apparent Rājyavardhana (later on king Rājyavardhana II) with the result that his victorious career suddenly came to an end. As we know, he was killed in battle by him soon after his occupation of Kanauj. In one of his land-grant charters the defeat of Devagupta at the hands of king Rājyavardhana has been admitted by emperor Harsha, as mentioned above. The death of Grahavarman was thus avenged by the Pushyabhūti king Rājyavardhana II.

The history of the Maukhari kingdom after the death of Grahavarman is inseparably connected with that of Emperor Harsha, since he transferred the seat of his government from Thāneśwara to Kanauj for important political reasons, as we shall see presently.

From the statement of Hsuan Chuang who is our primary source of information relating to the history of this period, it appears that both Harsha and Rājyaśrī used to sit on the throne together and rule over the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The information supplied by him is interesting but is apparently incomplete. For instance, we do not understand why the emperor's sister would sit by his side to administer the State, instead of his queen, according to Hindu tradition. It also passes our comprehension why the royal sister should be invited to share the responsibility of governing the kingdom along with the emperor. In view of these absurdities, we think that the pilgrim has not fully stated the facts although he has recorded what he had seen with his own eyes. After the death of Grahavarman, who died, as we think, without any issue, constitutionally his queen Rājyaśrī could be the ruler of the Maukhari kingdom, in the absence or, even during the minority, of any claimant to the throne. Being in the position of the highest executive head of the State, she had the right to appoint any competent person as her political adviser or even as her agent. After the death of Grahavarman, Harsha had transferred his capital to Kanauj leaving Thāneśwara, the old capital of the Pushyabhūti. The

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1. Watters, i., p. 345.



reason for transferring the seat of government from one place to another cannot be easily accounted for, unless it be that he had to help his sister constantly in carrying on the administration of the Maukhari kingdom, which was by no means insignificant in size or area and also by no means free from dangers due to the policy of territorial aggrandisement of some of the neighbouring powers. The fact that both the brother and the sister used to sit together on the throne and dispense with the business of the State, as we have been informed by the pilgrim, is not incredible, if we realise correctly the responsibilities of either of them, after the death of Grahavarman. Again, Emperor Harsha had taken the vow of not wearing the crown.<sup>1</sup> If this information as supplied also by Hsuan Chuang be correct, there was no question of the usurpation of the Maukhari throne by Harsha. In our opinion, the transfer of the capital from Thāneśwara to Kanauj by Harsha was to assist his widowed sister in governing the Maukhari kingdom as her representative or political adviser. The main reason which led him to place her on the throne by his side was to show that she represented in her person the interest of her State, as he did, that of his own. It means also that he maintained the integrity of the Maukhari kingdom as inherited by Rājyaśrī, even though he exercised paramountcy over a considerable portion of northern India. This is the only possible and rational explanation of the information supplied by the Chinese pilgrim that the brother and the sister ruled jointly sitting together on the throne. We do not know whether Rājyaśrī survived Harsha or not; but it appears from the aforesaid statement, that her political independence was fully recognised by her royal brother by giving her all the opportunities of administering her own kingdom so long as he was alive.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Maukhari Kingdom After the Death of Harsha :*

From a Nālandā Seal Inscription it appears that king Avantivarman Maukhari had a second son named Sucha(ndravarman) who

1. Harsha lived upto 646 A.D. and, according to Hsuan Chuang, Rājyaśrī was alive upto the time of the sixth quinquennial assembly held at Prayāga which was attended by the Chinese pilgrim and which took place in 644 A.D. (Watters, i, p. 361). As Rājyaśrī was also younger to Harsha, we naturally believe that she outlived her brother.

2. Watters, i, p. 343.



appears to have exercised sovereign sway over some part or perhaps the whole of the Maukhari kingdom.<sup>1</sup> That he had more than one son is also evident from a statement of Bāṇa made in his *Harshacharita* wherein he has specifically mentioned that Grahavarman was the eldest of all.<sup>2</sup> While the existence of Sucha(ndravarma), probably the last of the Maukhari of Kanauj, can no longer be doubted, in view of the epigraphic evidence cited above, it seems rather strange why he was not placed on the throne by Harsha, had he the intention of not annexing the Maukhari kingdom. We believe that this second son of Avantivarman was merely a child when Grahavarman Maukhari was killed. After taking everything into consideration, Harsha decided to recognise his sister as the ruler of the Maukhari territory in preference to Sucha(ndravarma) who was considered by him to be unfit for placing on the throne on account of his tender age. We have already mentioned above that king Avantivarman had a premature death for which reason he could not even arrange for the marriage of the heir-apparent Grahavarman during his life-time. In view of the serious responsibility that had befallen on the shoulder of Harsha, viz., to look after the interest and welfare of his widowed sister Rājyaśrī and also that of the orphan prince Sucha(ndravarma), there is no doubt that the policy which Harsha had adopted in respect of the Maukhari kingdom was the most correct, reasonable and honest, taking the political condition of northern India as a whole into consideration.

That Harsha made Kanauj the seat of his government, whence he ruled over his empire, including the Maukhari territories, is more than evident. We do not know when exactly his death took place, but the probability, as stated above, is that it took place some time in 646-47 A.D. The reason for our acceptance of this date is mainly based on the date of Wang-hiuen-tse's return to Ch'angan, the imperial capital of China during the T'ang period, after fulfilling his First Mission and that of his arrival in India, after nine or ten months, in connection with the Second Mission. He returned to China after his First Mission either at the close of

1. E.I., XXIV, p. 283.

2. H.C., p. 122 (तत्रापि तिलकभूतस्यावन्तिवर्मणाः सूनुरग्रजो ग्रहवर्मा नाम....  
Text, p. 141).



646 A.D. or towards the beginning of 647 A.D. and came back to India towards the close of 647 A.D., when Emperor Harsha was already dead.<sup>1</sup> It may be noted here that he came to this country twice prior to A.D. 650, viz., in the years 646 and 647 A.D. on both political and cultural missions by the order of the Chinese emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, who was anxious to maintain friendly relations with his Indian contemporary Harsha Śīlāditya. When he arrived for the second time, the Indian monarch whom he came to meet, was already dead and his minister Arjuna or Aruṇāśva (A-la-na-shuen) had usurped the throne.<sup>2</sup> It appears from the statement of Ma-twan-lin that the Second Mission of Wang-hiuen-tse was a failure, since he and his companions were so badly treated that they took to flight for their own safety and ultimately entered into Nepal, the king of which country maintained friendly relations with the rulers of both Tibet and China. A few months later, he invaded the kingdom of Arjuna from Nepal with the help of an army which was composed of 7,000 Nepalese cavalry and 12,000 Tibetan infantry, to avenge the insult perpetrated on him directly and on his over-lord, emperor T'ai-Tsung, indirectly. From the itinerary of this Chinese general, it appears that a battle was fought somewhere in the province of T'irabhukti (Tirhut), in the course of which the army of Arjuna was routed. The defeated Indian king fled from the battlefield but gathering his scattered forces reappeared to punish the Chinese invader. A second battle was fought at a different place the locality of which has not been mentioned in the history of Ma-twan-lin but it has been specifically stated in it that the usurper was successfully defeated and was caught with his followers. From the same source it further appears that the casualty on the side of the Indian army was rather heavy. Arjuna was subsequently taken to China via Nepal and Tibet as war-prisoner and presented before emperor T'ai-Tsung for adequate punishment for being solely responsible for the loss of so many lives. By the order of the emperor of China the captive was cast into prison, where he remained till his death. According to our computations, Arjuna was taken to China as a prisoner of war to-

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1. I.A., IX, p. 20; See also Sino-Indian Studies, I, p. 69.

2. *ibid.*



wards the end of 648 A.D., he being defeated sometime in the earlier part of that year.

It will be seen from what we have stated above that there was no possibility for the younger brother of king Grahavarman Maukhari to rule over his ancestral kingdom at least upto the middle of the year 648 A.D. because it had remained long in the possession of Harsha and after him for at least one year under the usurper Arjuna. During the latter part of 648 A.D. Sucha(ndravarman) might have ascended the throne, there being possibly no further impediment on his way to the throne. It is not certain for how many years exactly he ruled, but there is no doubt that he exercised sovereign sway over the former Maukhari kingdom and also over its dependencies. The imperialistic title, Mahārājādhirāja,<sup>1</sup> as borne by him, must not lead us to the supposition that he ruled as a paramount sovereign like Harsha over the whole of northern India, since we know for certain that his Gupta contemporary Ādityasena was ruling over a considerable portion of the Gangetic valley in the east and bore the very same title.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of the seal of Sucha(ndravarman) at Nālandā, which lay in the territory of that Gupta monarch, may only be taken to be an indication of the fact that the two rulers maintained friendly or diplomatic relations with each other, a fact which might have induced the Maukhari king to make an endowment in the Nālandā University, the proper use of which has been testified to by the discovery of his seal in its ruins. Whatever may be the case, there is no evidence, whether positive or negative, even to adumbrate that the two royal families were engaged in hostility against each other.

In the *Ārya-Mañjuśrī-Mūla-Kalpa* in which a list of the Maukhari kings of Kanauj is to be found, there is the mention of a king named Suvra after Graha(varman). The presumption that naturally arises is that Suvra is the same as Sucha(ndravarman) of the aforesaid Nālandā Seal, coming, as it does, after Graha(varman). It may be noted here that Dr. N. P. Chakravarti finds traces of the letter *cha* after *Su* and restores the name of the king in ques-

1. E.I., XXIV, p. 285.

2. C.I.I., III, p. 212, No. 44 and 45 (Mandar Hill Rock Inscription).



tion as Sucha(ndravarman).<sup>1</sup> We, however, find some difficulty in considering Sucha (ndravarman) and Suvra(tavarman ?) to be identical, since the latter has been placed genealogically after Graha-(varman) and consequently should be considered to be his son rather than his brother. Taking into consideration the arrangement of the names as we find in that text viz., the name of the son occurs after that of his father, this suspicion of ours is by no means baseless. Merely because both the names begin with the syllable *Su*, the kings who bore them cannot be considered to be one and the same person. There is, thus, the possibility of a king named Suvra-(tavarman) succeeding his uncle Sucha(ndravarman), if we take our stand on the genealogical arrangement of the kings as given in that Buddhist work. We, however, do not want to lay much emphasis on this point since neither Bāṇa nor Hsuan Chuang has made any direct or indirect reference to the son and successor of Grahavarman's queen Rājyaśrī. On the other hand, the impression that we get about her from their respective works is that she had indeed a very short married life.

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1. Mr. A. Ghosh reads the name of the son of Avantivarman occurring in the Nālandā Seal Inscription edited by him as Suva.....(E.I., XXIV, p. 285).

Since the portion of the seal where the name occurs has peeled off, only two letters may be read with more or less certainty. According to Mr. Ghosh these two letters may be read either as Suva.....or Such.....The note that has been appended by Dr. N.P. Chakravarti, on the reading of those two letters is as follows : "It is curious that the *Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa* mentions a king Suvra after Graha; see Ganapati Sastri's edition (Triv. Skt. Series), p. 626. See also K.P. Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India*, p. 27 § 19 (c). Jayaswal corrects the last *pada* of the verse as *Graha-Suvrata* (a)th=aparah which according to the ordinary rules of *Anuṣṭubh* would spoil the metre. As the last visible letter on this seal seems to be a part of *n* and as there seems to be a *repha* sign below it, I am tempted to restore the concluding portion as *śrī-Sucha-(ndravarmma Maukhariḥ)*". The restoration of the name as suggested by Dr. Chakravarti and the arguments adduced by him in support thereof are highly convincing. It is a well-known fact that in the inscriptions and coins of the Gupta and the post-Gupta period *cha* is sometimes written as *va* and *vice versa*; and we have a number of instances to show where confusion has arisen because of the negligence on the part of the scribe. This feature is also noticeable in the inscriptions of the Gurjara-Pratihāras written in proto-Nāgarī script. From this point of view the suggestion of Dr. Chakravarti appears to be valid. We, therefore, prefer to accept the reading of the name as suggested by him. One thing is, however, certain, and that is—we cannot be definite on this point till a similar Maukhari seal comes to light.

In the *Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa*, Pt. T.G. Sastri reads the name of the successor of Avantivarman as Suvra. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to suggest any name beginning with these two letters, except Suvratavarman. But considering the fact that the writer of that work, whatever might have been his source of information, has given wrong readings of names in many places, we prefer to accept the name as restored by Dr. Chakravarti, which in our opinion has been supported by certain grammatical and paleographical facts which cannot be easily ignored. Cf. E.I., XXIV, p. 284, n. 6; A.M.M.K., ed. T. Ganapati Sastri, p. 626.



The last of the Maukharis of Kanauj, as it appears to us by taking the evidence of the aforesaid Nālandā Seal Inscription into consideration, was Sucha(ndravarman)<sup>1</sup> and the same, as suggested by *Ārya-Maṇjuśrī-Mūla-Kalpa*, was Suvra(tavarman).<sup>2</sup> But whether there was any other king after him in that line, is a point which requires careful investigation. From a certain Nepalese inscription we learn of a Maukhari chief named Bhogavarman who became the son-in-law of king Ādityasena of Magadha.<sup>3</sup> The chronological data preserved in the inscription of Jayadeva II of the Thakuri family of Nepal enable us to place Bhogavarman approximately in the third and fourth quarters of the 7th cent. A.D.<sup>4</sup> We learn further from the same source that his daughter Vatsadevi was married to the Thakuri king Śivadeva II of Nepal who was ruling in the year 725 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, no information is available about the date of his marriage with Vatsadevi; but the presumption is that he must have been married much earlier than that date. We will not be very far from truth if we fix it at about 710 A.D. when she was about 16 years of age. In order to understand our hypothesis in its proper setting the probable dates and facts noted below are to be considered.

Grahavarman Maukhari died towards the middle of the year 605 A.D. About that time queen Rājyaśrī was only 12 years of age, she having been born in the year C. 593 A.D.<sup>6</sup> There was

1. E.I., XXIV, p. 285.

2. A.M.M.K., p. 626.

3. I.A., IX, p. 178, Ins. No. 15, line 13 (Inscription of Jayadeva II).

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.*

6. We arrive at this date on the basis of certain data contained in the *Harshacharita*. According to Bāṇa there was a difference of about six years between the age of Rājyavardhana and Rājyaśrī and that Harsha was about two years old when Rājyaśrī was born (H.C., pp. 115-16). Now it is unanimously held by all the historians that Prabhākaravardhana's death and Rājyavardhana's expedition against the Hūṇas, his accession and death, all took place in 605-6 A.D. At that time, according to Bāṇa, Rājyavardhana's age "fitted him for wearing armour" (H.C., p. 132) and that "his beard showed but a faint growth" (H.C., p. 166). This makes us conclude that at that time Rājyavardhana could not have been more than eighteen years old. It means that he must have been born in about 586 A.D. and naturally, therefore, we conclude that Harsha must have been born in about 590 A.D. and Rājyaśrī in 593 A.D. Here we may mention that C.V. Vaidya (H.M.H.I., I, p. 41.F.) has also suggested the same date for the birth of Harsha on the basis of certain astronomical calculations which he made on the information given in the *Harshacharita*.



thus no question on the part of the couple to have a child.<sup>1</sup> Harsha ascended the throne in the second half of the year 606 A.D. and continued to rule from Kanauj at least upto the middle of the year 646 A.D., as stated above. That Avantivarman had a son by the name of Sucha(ndravarman) who was younger to Grahavarman can no longer be doubted. As he had ruled, obviously after Harsha, his accession to the throne appears to have taken place in the year 648 A.D., probably in the second half of it. It may be noted here that, according to the Chinese authorities, Arjuna usurped the throne of Kanauj immediately after the death of Harsha and continued to rule till the middle of 648 A.D., he being presented as a war-captive before the Chinese emperor in the very same year. There is, thus, no gap in the chronology of the history of Kanauj upto the middle of the year 648 A.D. since the death of King Avantivarman. The accession of the younger brother of Grahavarman can take place only in the latter part of the year 648 A.D. when the throne of Kanauj was vacant. Regarding his age at the time of his accession it may be mentioned here that since he was born sometime before the death of Avantivarman which took place in or about the year 602 A.D. and since he could not be raised to the throne by Harsha as the legitimate successor of Grahavarman, he must have been merely a child of two or three years of age when his father died. We have already stated above on the basis of certain available data that his father had a premature death. Since the reign periods of Harsha and Arjuna who ruled one after another in succession from Kanauj, amounted to 42 years, Sucha(ndravarman), in our opinion, ascended the throne when he was 45 years old, more or less. According to our calculations he ruled upto C. 664 A.D., that is to say, he enjoyed a reign of about 16 years. We have obtained this approximate date with the help of certain chronological dates and historical facts stated below.

The chronology of the history of Kanauj from 650 to 700 A.D. does not stand on a firm footing unlike that of the first half of the

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1. If Rājyaśrī had a baby or had even conceived by that time, she would not have gone to emulate herself in the Vindhya forest after the death of Grahavarman. This fact is also supported by a statement made on behalf of Rājyaśrī by Patralatā, her betel-bearer, in the *Harshacharita*: "A husband or a son is a woman's true support; but to those who are deprived of both, it is immodesty even to continue to live as mere fuel for the fire of misery" (H.C., p. 254).



7th cent. A.D. It is only with the help of backward calculations that we have been able to fix approximately the year of the death of Sucha(ṇdravarman). We have mentioned above that certain Nepalese inscriptions throw light on the later Maukhari history. Vatsadevī, the daughter of Bhogavarman, a Maukhari chief, was married to king Śivadeva II. The dates available from the afore-said records are 119 and 143(?) of the Harsha Saṃvat corresponding to 724 and 748(?) A.D. respectively.<sup>1</sup> When these inscriptions were engraved, Śivadeva II was ruling over Nepal. From an inscription of Jayadeva II, son of Śivadeva II, dated in the year 153 of the Harsha Saṃvat, corresponding to 758 A.D., it appears that his mother was Vatsadevī who was the daughter of king Bhogavarman Maukhari and grand-daughter of king Ādityasena.<sup>2</sup> Vatsadevī appears to have been married sometime before the year 724 A.D. In this connection it may be noted here that since her son Jayadeva II ascended the throne of Nepal, he should be expected ordinarily to have been the crown-prince and his mother, the chief queen. Thus, if she was ruling along with her consort Śivadeva II in 724 A.D., which is the earliest date for that king known to us so far, we should consider her to have been about 29 years of age in that year. She might have been older even by two or three years than the age suggested by us but not younger in any case, according to our computations. We will not be very far from truth if we fix 694 A.D. as the probable date of her birth, although there is the possibility of her being born between 692 and 694 A.D. Now the question that arises is : what was the age of her father Bhogavarman when she was born ? According to our calculations he was 45 or 46 years old, when his daughter in question was born. This will obviously lead us to fix 648 A.D. approximately as the date of his birth. Before we proceed further certain facts in the history of the later Guptas of Magadha have to be taken into consideration to substantiate the chronological sequences suggested above. These may be set forth as follows :

King Mādhavagupta, son of king Mahāsenagupta was a friend of Emperor Harsha, since childhood, and later on, his distinguished

1. I.A., IX, p. 174, 176, Ins. Nos. 12 and 13.

2. *ibid*, p. 178, Ins. No. 15.



ally. There was, again, not much difference between the age of the two. In fact, both of them appear to have been born about the year 590 A.D. These interesting and important pieces of information have been supplied by the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa and the Aṃśad Stone Inscription of Ādityasena.<sup>1</sup> From the latter source it also appears that he was appointed viceroy of the eastern part of Harsha's dominion in northern India excluding Kāmarūpa, obviously after the flight of Śaśāṅka.<sup>2</sup> As stated before, Harsha died in the year 646 A.D. but we do not know, when the death of Mādhavagupta took place, in the absence of any reliable datum. The son of the latter was Ādityasena who bore the imperialistic title Mahārājādhirāja, apparently because of the vastness of his kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Of the three inscriptions belonging to his reign one preserves a date and that is 672 A.D. (66 H.E.).<sup>4</sup> Although a single chronological datum cannot be considered to be sufficient help towards fixing the lower limit of Mādhavagupta's period of administration or the earlier limit of Ādityasena's reign as an independent ruler of the eastern part of northern India, we do not think that there will be a gross anachronism if we fix 655 A.D. for the same. This approximation is based on the supposition that Mādhavagupta lived for 65 years, which is quite normal. Thus, if Mādhavagupta died in 655 A.D. and Ādityasena was at least 30 years old at the time of his accession, the birth of the latter may be fixed in or about the year 625 A.D. According to our calculations Mādhavagupta was 35 years old when prince Ādityasena was born.

We have mentioned above that Sucha(ndravarma) died in C. 664 A.D. This Maukhari king, chronologically speaking, was thus in a position to establish matrimonial alliance between his family and that of the later Guptas of Magadha by giving his son in marriage with the daughter of king Ādityasena. We have further mentioned above that Vatsadevi was born when her father Bhogavarman was approximately 45 or 46 years of age. This will lead us to fix the date of Bhogavarman's birth in the years 648-49

1. H.C., p. 119, 121, 235; C.I.I., iii, p. 203-4, No. 42.

2. C.I.I., iii, p. 2; 3 f, No. 42.

3. *ibid.*

4. C.I.I., iii, p. 210, No. 43 (Shahpur Image Inscription).



A.D. Thus the difference of age between Ādityasena, the father-in-law, and Bhogavarman, the son-in-law, would be approximately 23 years, which is normal. It will be noticed further that this chronological position establishes the contemporaneity of the Maukhari king Sucha(ndravarman), his son Bhogavarman and the Gupta king Ādityasena.

If we, therefore, place Bhogavarman after Sucha(ndravarman) or whatever might have been his real name as his son and successor, no chronological difficulty is to be envisaged. It is, however, a fact that the addition of a new name in the list of the Maukhari kings of Kanauj is only possible with the help of the aforesaid Nepalese inscriptions and that too by means of backward calculations which is by no means unhistorical or unreasonable. It remains, however, for the future historians to prove the correctness of the approximate dates given above and place Bhogavarman correctly in the chronology of Maukhari history in the light of fresh epigraphic data, if available.













